

Compassion Makes a Difference



By Pastor Jack Hyles



In battles and in great movements like this, we have to fight to keep our hearts. As we are attacked and as we face the enemy, if we don't watch, we will keep our heads right but lose our hearts.

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Jude 20-23.

Creation Without Compassion

First came the light, then the firmament, then God lit the starry host in the sky, then He made the fishes of the sea and the animal kingdom. After that, everything was ready for man.

God made man in His own wonderful image. Every tree that grew was pleasant to the sight. Rivers flowed peaceably between verdant banks. Every sound was a melody; every scene, a delight.

There was no war to give unrest in the breast. There was no sickness to cause fear of death. The leaf never withered. The wind never chilled. No perspiration moistened the ground. There was no profanity. There was no heat, no cold. There was no sin. No blossoms were smitten by a tempest. Man had not yet learned how to sigh, nor learned how to weep. There was no withering frost to chill the rose and take its petal. No shadow of guilt was ever known for Adam. There was a choir of birds that always sang. Yet something was missing. Here was the Garden of Eden. All that God had made was good, and God had made all that was good . And here was man, and here was a perfect garden of bliss.

But something was missing. Adam needed someone to share with him this wonder. He needed someone to laugh with him and rejoice with him and eat with him and enjoy it all with him. Adam yearned for companionship. He longed for communion with a kindred soul, one whose joys were like his own. The virgin world was cold and blank: something was missing.

Creation With Compassion

God looked down and from Adam took a rib. Here she comes dressed in all of her beauty. John Milton said she was adorned with all that Heaven and earth could bestow to make her amiable. Grace was in her step. Heaven was in her eye. Every gesture possessed dignity and love. Perfection was stamped on her. The sons of God shouted for joy, and the morning stars sang together. Eden was transformed because now Adam has someone with whom he can fellowship. Someone to care. Someone to cheer. Someone to share. Someone to love. Now everything is complete.

Someone wrote:

The earth was sad,

The Garden wild.

The hermit sighed,

Till woman smiled.

Not a creature since Adam has escaped this need for someone to care. The weary housewife, busy with her day's activities, comes to the close of the day wishing that somebody could say, "I care, and I understand." The trudging laborer, coming from the steel mill, comes home at night just wishing that someone could say, "I know you're tired and weary, and I care." The lonely mother, the student's wife, the busy student, the harried boss and, I must confess, those of us who stand behind the pulpit are often encouraged by the realization that somebody cares.

Compassion's Contributions

Compassion. Compassion is the nurse given to mankind. Compassion cares for the helpless. Compassion mothers the orphan. Compassion feeds the hungry. Compassion clothes the cold. Compassion helps the helpless. Compassion raises the fallen. Compassion resides at the humble fireside, as those who love gather at the end of day. Compassion shines upon the coldness and warms it. Shines upon suffering and relieves it. Shines upon sorrow and shares it. I would like to talk to you about something we had better work to keep. We can win all the victories we want to win, fight all the battles we want to fight, shed all the blood we want to shed, build all the great buildings we want to build; but if we lose the moist spot in our eyes, we have no need of all of our buildings. Compassion.

The College Student's Wife

Her name is Mrs. College Student's Wife. Her address is Upstairs Apartment, U.S.A. She fell in love when she was in the high school department in a fundamental church. Soon engagement came, and after awhile the man of God's choosing for her life married her.

They had to live in a little upstairs apartment at first because he had just gotten started at his business.

Then one day they got a car. It was a number of years old. How happy they were!

Then the day came when she found out she was expecting a baby. Another one came. The husband had gotten a promotion at work, and he now had enough money to buy a new car.

Then one day he said, "Sweetheart, I have gotten another promotion and a big raise in pay. Why don't we look for a new house?" So their dreams of many years were fulfilled as they began to search for just the right house that seemed to bear their image and mark.

One day they moved in. The little children were so pleased. They had their own room. The house was so lovely. And they got just the right furniture to match the carpet, just the right drapes to match the furniture, just the right everything to match everything else. Everything was so wonderful because the dreams of early childhood had been fulfilled. The lovely new home, the nice new car... everything was just right.

John taught a Sunday school class and was also an usher. She taught a Beginners class. She also sang in the choir.

One night the service was unusually sweet. Sitting in the choir, she noticed that John came down the aisle. She thought, John hasn't done anything real bad. What could John be coming down the aisle for? John knelt at the altar and cried. She didn't understand it. When they got home John sat down and said, "Sweetheart, do you know why I went forward tonight? God has called me to preach. That means we have to go away to college."

"But, John. . . ."

"I know. I love it all, too. I dream with you." "But, John, couldn't you just preach at the rescue mission here? After all, the hospitals need somebody to preach to them. John, we have dreamed ... Our children....."

You know the story.

The house was put up for sale. She prayed that the first folks who came by to look at it would drop dead on the spot! But they said, "It is just what we wanted!"

But she said, "But the faucets leak. There are not enough nails in the dry wall. And the floor is going to buckle when there comes a freeze." But they bought the house.

Then they sold the car. Then they said goodbye to their church and went off to school. They could find only an upstairs apartment, much like the one they had had before. If they came to Hammond, it was snowing and below zero. If they came to Chattanooga, it was raining.

John said, "Now, honey, here is my schedule. I will get up at 6:00 a.m. and go to my first class at 7:00. School is over at 1:00. I go to work at 3:00 and work until midnight. It takes an hour to drive home Then up again at 6:00 a.m. and off again to my first class."

Fundamentalism Needs Old-Fashioned Revival

of Character and Compassion

Her name is Mama. Some folks in the South call her Grandma. Her address is Rest Home, U.S.A. She may bore you with her fellowship, as she has so very little of it. Sometimes she doesn't know exactly how to behave when someone comes to see her. You may have to shout to be heard. And food may be dripping from her mouth as she talks to you, for she does not realize exactly how she looks. She has no offering to give. Her hands may tremble, and you may notice a foul odor in the room.

You see, one day her youngest child stood at the altar. And as the recessional was being played, that daughter and her groom marched out the back. It seemed the whole bottom had fallen out of life. Oh, there was still the old man. She still loved him, and they still shared life together. Until one day, suddenly, he was taken.

She tried to keep her house because she didn't want to give up housekeeping. She was a feisty little rascal, and gritty to the end and full of spunk. But she began to fall a lot, especially in wintertime. Then the children one day got together to try to decide what to do with mother. No one suggested she come and live with them. After all, you can't expect a son to take care of his aged mother just because she entered the jaws of death to give him life. You can't expect him to feed his aged mother and give a bed in his own house to her, just because she gave her life for him and did without and sacrificed and worked and prayed and hoped and dreamed and gave up and did without. You can't expect some son or daughter to be gracious or grateful enough, when mama can't take care of herself, to do what mama did when you couldn't take care of yourself.

If you want to see something that pictures the degradation and depravity of the United States of America, look at these rest homes dotting the horizon around this country. Fundamentalism needs an old-fashioned revival of integrity and character and decency and honor to take care of our own again. So as they decided what to do with mother, she suggested, "I have an idea. There are some real nice rest homes around the country, and there are a lot of older people my age there, and I think I would enjoy being with them." She didn't mean what she said, but she thought that was the easy way out for you. So the children took her there and left her. Her hands never open a letter today. Her ears never hear the ring of a phone. Her cheeks never feel the warmth of a kiss. Her feet never take her outside the home. Her eyes never see her loved ones. She never hears anybody say, "I love you." There she sits this morning.

Oh, by the way, you used to know her well because when you first started preaching you relished the opportunity of going to speak to her. But now you have carpets and buildings and chandeliers and padded pews. Now you have a big drive-in crowd of people, and you have sort of forgotten that that little gal prayed for you with power back yonder when you were a kid.

'The First Time ... Anybody Prayed for Me'

I was in the hospital visiting one of our men. After I had prayed for him, I walked away, rushing to my morning broadcast. I heard an old voice say to me as I began to leave, "Hey, Reverend! Would you pray that prayer for me, too?" I turned and saw a man who said he was 88 years of age. He said, "Reverend, nobody has ever prayed for me. Would you pray that prayer for me, too?" I bowed my head and prayed as best I could for him. The old man took my hand and said, "Reverend, thank you. That is the first time I ever heard anybody pray for me."

Oh, let me tell you, ladies and gentlemen, this country of ours is a sick, suffering, sad country. Somebody needs to care. There ought to be some place in every village and town and every countryside and hamlet and neighborhood in America that has a man of God behind the pulpit who knows how it is to 'weep o'er the erring one, and care for the fallen, and tell them that Jesus, the Mighty, can save.' There ought to be some institution in every village and hamlet and neighborhood and town in America that weeps o'er the erring one and cares for the fallen and the burdened and cares for those who are shut-in. There are folks in this room this morning who have not one time in a year made one call to one of these mighty millions of aged people whom nobody seems to care about.

Oh, beloved brethren, we better not lose our heart. I am against sin like you are. There is nothing I am not against. I am against it all. I dot every fundamental I and cross every fundamental t. But I am not concerned about a dry-eyed fundamentalism. I am concerned about a fundamentalism that has compassion, one that seems to care.

The Bus Ministry Needs Compassion

His name is Johnny. Or maybe it is Joe or Pete or Jack. His address is Ghetto, U.S.A. He is a little fellow. He did not know he was abnormal, or not normal, until he visited the home of a friend down the street. He looked in the closet and saw the ' friend's clothes and compared that to his clothes. And he thought he must be poor. He looked inside the cupboard and saw all the food and remembered what his cupboard looked like at home. And he decided he must be poor. He looked at the shoes on his friend, and he looked at his own bare feet. And he decided he must be poor. He noticed he was different. Then one day his mother called him in and said, "Son, your father left home this morning. He will never come back."

The boy said, "But, mommy, where is he going?"

"Your father and I are getting a divorce."

"Well, why? Why?"

Or maybe the little fellow didn't even know who his daddy was. His mother got busy, and he hardly knew he had a mother because she had to go to work early in the morning and work until late at night to make ends meet. He is just the poor little kid in the neighborhood.

His only Christmas is what the church brings him. Somebody knocks on the door with a big Santa Claus suit on and says, "Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!" There is a Christmas tree. That is the only Christmas he ever had. The only Thanksgiving he ever had was when the church brought a Thanksgiving turkey to his family. He has never had a birthday cake or felt a shiny pair of new shoes on his own feet. He has never heard anybody say, "You are a cute little fellow." He sort of needs you.

I am worried about the deterioration of the bus ministry. I know they mess up the services. They make the carpet filthy. I have seen where a little kid has taken a knife and slit right down the beautiful upholstered pews that I gave my life's blood to put there. But I would rather have the cut pew and the dirty carpet, than to have a poor little fellow never hear "I love you," and nobody to pat him on the head and say, "God bless you, fellow." Ladies and gentlemen, twenty-two years ago when I spoke to fundamentalists for the very first time, we were in storefront buildings. We were in tents. We didn't have carpets and chandeliers. And the folks I am preaching about today are the only kind who would hear us. And we better get back to them. Our 5,000-seat auditorium is all white and gold. Gold carpet, gold pews, gold padding and white wood. Every piece of wood in the building is white. I wanted on Dedication Day to have a dignified service, not a formal one. The mayor was there. The city council was there. The bank president was there. Dignitaries from all over Hammond were there. I didn't want them to find out what we were really like. I wanted one time to have a dignified service. We were doing real, real well, I recall. I thought, Good night! This is so good, I think I will just do this all the time.

Like one little boy who went to the picture show, and he came home and told his Nazarene mother, "Mother, if you just went to the picture show one time you would never want to go to prayer meeting anymore." I felt, Boy, this is great! It is fun being dignified. I never tried it before. It is fun being proper. I never tried it before. In our dignified service sat the mayor, the city councilmen, the bank president, the dignitaries. The house was packed, and folks were standing outside. And right in the middle of my sermon that morning when I was trying to be dignified, way up in the balcony some little bus kid got a bulletin and began to make an airplane out of it. I knew what was coming. I thought, Oh, I hope he won't launch that missile in this auditorium. But down it came! I know what such things do to a service. You have to stop and say, "Hey! You sit still while I'm preaching." Well, let me tell you something. I would rather have a service not quite as dignified and a sermon not quite as eloquent and have those little bus kids there who need Jesus and need loving. We need to care.

We have four on our deacon board right now who were once bus kids. Seven of our little bus kids have grown up and now teach in our Christian school. Thirteen of our bus kids are now wives of pastors. Twenty-seven are in full-time service for God. Over two hundred are in our Christian schools now. We even started a new high school this year. We already had a high school, but this is our bus kids' high school. It is just for bus kids. One hundred and ten students already have signed up in our high school. Some of these are ex-hoodlums and ghetto kids and the switch-blade kind.

I Once Was One of Them

I guess the reason I plead the case for these is that I once was one of them.

Thank God, when I was a little boy, nobody yet had found out it was wrong to give a poor kid a balloon in Sunday school. The first balloon I ever held in my hand, somebody gave me in Sunday school.

I am glad that I was a kid, a poor kid, when nobody had yet found out it was wrong to give a kid a hamburger because he was hungry. We thought it was feeding him to keep him from starving back in those days. The first hamburger I ever ate was given to me by my Sunday school teacher.

Down in the human heart

Crushed by the tempter,

Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;

Touched by a loving heart,

Wakened by kindness,

Cords that are broken will vibrate once more.

I can't drive down the streets of Chicago without tears. Oh, the suffering!

The heartache! The sorrow!

One little girl three weeks ago came to me and said, "Brother Hyles, I don't know what to do. I am pregnant by my own father." That is the way it is. Concrete jungle of sin and sorrow! Somebody needs to care! I am not concerned about a fundamentalist that dots the I and crosses the t and believes the virgin birth—and I do believe it with all of my soul. I'm a fundamentalist from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet. But in God's dear name, let's don't lose the moistened spot right there at the corner of the eye.

O my God in Heaven, there is a country going to Hell. Somebody said, "O Brother Hyles, sin is so bad." I know. Every time an extra tavern goes up, you have a brokenhearted wife sitting at home waiting for somebody to come and cheer her. Every time an extra tavern goes up or a nightclub, you have some orphan kids who need somebody to send a bus by their house and get them and bring them to Sunday school and feed them when they are hungry and clothe them when they are naked and love them when they are unloved and pat them on the head and say, "God bless you!" Somebody needs to care. Compassion makes a difference. "Ain't You Even Gonna Cry?"

A little girl came to our Sunday school, seven years of age. She called me Mister Brother Hyles. She came after the service one morning and said, "Mister Brother Hyles, would you be my best friend?"

I said, "You got yourself a deal there, honey. I'll be your best friend." She kissed me on the cheek, and I tousled her hair and told her she was cute. Beneath the dirt on her face there was a pretty face. Beneath

the filth in her hair was a lovely little girl. Behind those tattered clothes was a body as precious to Jesus as the body of your child and mine. On Sunday mornings she came up after baptism. "Mister Brother Hyles, we are best friends, ain't we?"

I said, "You better know it. We sure are good friends, and I love you. You are a pretty little girl."

Her mother was a prostitute and her dad an alcoholic. Nobody ever looked at her little story she brought home from Sunday school. Nobody asked her what it was like in Sunday school. But she had a best friend. One morning after several months she came up and said, "Mister Brother Hyles, I have some bad news for you."

"What is it?"

"We are best friends, and my family is moving out of the state, and this is the last time we are going to get to see each other." I said, "Oh, I'm so sorry about that because I do love you, and you are mighty pretty and sweet, and I love you very much, and we are best friends." She said, "Mister Brother Hyles, you don't understand. This is the last time you will ever get to see me on this earth. We are moving out of the state, and we are best friends."

I said, "Honey, I understand that. And I sure will miss you." She put her hands on her hips and looked at me with big tears as she said, "Mister Brother Hyles, ain't you even gonna cry?" And I said, "Yes, I am."

Ain't you even gonna cry when you preach on Hell? Ain't you even gonna cry when you preach against the adult bookstores? Ain't you even gonna cry when you preach against liquor? Ain't you even gonna cry when you preach against the homosexual crowd? Ain't you even gonna cry? Compassion makes a difference.

The Case of the Retarded Baby

Her address is Anywhere, U.S.A. She is a mother. She and her husband have a new baby whom they love. He grows and learns to say "dadda" and "mama." But one day the mother notices the eyes don't focus just right. There is a strange look about the eye.

Mother and dad go to the doctor's office. The doctor gives the examination, and a few others; then the word comes. The baby is retarded. Ain't you even gonna cry? Ain't you even gonna cry? Thousands of them across America whom nobody seems to care about.

How about the deaf? How about the blind? How about the cripple? "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Rom. 8:22.

Fundamentalist, ain't you even gonna cry? Preacher, ain't you even gonna cry? Ain't you gonna cry because of poor little kids and the folks in the rest homes and the maimed, the halt, the blind, the lonely, the sad, the poor, the naked, the hungry, the unloved, the unlovable? Ain't you even gonna cry?

Compassion Makes a Difference

Ladies and gentlemen, if we get to the place where we memorize this Bible and dot every fundamental i and cross every fundamental t and find out exactly who the Antichrist is and win all the battles we have to win, if we lose our tears, we have lost our right to exist! Compassion makes a difference. Brother Coleman and I were in Ottawa, Kansas. We were asked to go eat in a lovely home. It was a wonderful meal with these sweet people. As we walked out to the car, Brother Coleman said, "Dr. Hyles, wasn't that fun?" I wasn't smiling as I said, "Yes, but I feel as guilty as the Devil because I have thousands of church members who would give anything to have me eat one time in their home. I feel like I have been unfaithful to my people, eating with somebody else and not having time for my own folks because there are so many of them. I have hundreds of people who would give anything in the world if they could find me long enough to have me sign their Bible." If I took thirty minutes with all of my members and spent forty hours a week doing nothing but counseling and gave each member thirty minutes, it would take me eight years.

I can't be in their homes, but I can think about them, and I can have compassion on them.

The Unsaved Need Compassion

His address is Anywhere, U.S.A., or Everywhere, U.S.A. He is an Unsaved man. He has heard all the sermons on Hell, but he is still not saved. He has heard all the sermons on the judgment; he has had his wife nag at him, and soul winners come by to see him; but he is still not saved. Do you know what he needs? Compassion! It makes a difference.

Compassion in the Dentist's Office

I was in a dentist's office. I tried to win the dentist's wife, who was also his nurse, but I couldn't win her.

One day I was waiting for my appointment. A short, elderly lady walked in. You've seen her-the kind who does housework all over America. You've seen her-a big, heavy-set lady, straight hair, legs wrapped because of varicose veins. She came in holding a set of teeth in her hands. She said, "The teeth won't fit." Some blood was on her mouth.

And the wife (the nurse), said, "But, Mary, the guarantee is all up. You should have come sooner."

"I didn't have any way to come. My teeth don't fit, and I can't afford any more teeth. I've got to have them fixed."

And the nurse said, "Mary, if you had just come before the guarantee was up, we could have fixed them."

I said, "Nurse, how much would it cost to give her a new set of teeth?" She told me. I said, "Fix her up a new set and put it on my bill." The dentist's wife said, "Are you serious?"

"Of course I'm serious. Make her a set of teeth and put it on my bill." Within two weeks I got a call from the dentist's wife. She said, "Could I come to your office?"

She came to my office and said, "I have hardly slept since you offered to buy those teeth. Now I can listen to what you have been trying to tell me." 'Twas compassion that made a difference.

Her Tears Won Him

I was sitting in my study trying to win a man to Christ but couldn't. His wife was a faithful member of our church, and I said to him, "Won't you be saved?" "No, sir. I am not interested."

I said, "But, sir, God loves you."

He said, "I don't want to, and I am not ready." All of a sudden his wife threw herself on the floor and said, "Honey, you have to get saved, or I'll die!"

He looked at her, and big tears came down his cheeks. Then he looked at me and said, "Reverend, I can do it when she cries."

Compassion makes a difference.

I am a fundamentalist. I am like you. I fight my battles. I don't belong to the ministerial association, and I don't plan to join them until they decide to believe the whole Word of God is inspired. I believe in shorter hair than most of you have on this morning. I believe in longer skirts than some of you wear. I am an old-fashioned, rock-ribbed, barnstorming, Hell-fire-and-damnation, window-rattling, shingle-pulling fundamentalist. But I want to weep, and I want to care. Because one day when I was a little barefoot boy with a little white tee shirt on and a little pair of khaki britches patched at the knees, my mother and I walked into our first city church I had ever attended. It seated 400 people. A little lady walked up to me, and she said, "Good morning." My mother said, "Good morning." She said, "My name is Mrs. Bethel."

My mother said, "My name is Mrs. Hyles. And this is my son, Jack."

Mrs. Bethel looked at me, and she said, "Hello there, Jack. How are you?"

I dropped my head and didn't say a word.

She said, "Could I call you Jackie Boy?"

I dropped my head and didn't say a word.

"How old are you, Jackie Boy?"

I dropped my head and didn't say a word.

My mama said, "He's five."

The lady said, "I'm superintendent of the five-year-old department, the Beginner department. You come with me."

We walked down the aisle, over to that door. The first door on the right was the Beginner department. She set me on her knee. She looked out, and she said, "Boys and girls, we have a visitor this morning." All the little boys had on white shirts and ties. All the little girls had on nice dresses. Twenty children had shoes on. I was the only barefoot kid, the only boy without a tie or a shirt. I tried to cover the holes in my trousers. I tried to put my feet behind me the best I could. She said, "Boys and girls, we have a visitor, Jackie Boy Hyles. Aren't we glad to have him?"

Nobody said a word. They just stared at my ten toes sticking out from underneath my britches. Then that godly teacher pulled my little face to her breast and said, "Jackie Boy, did you know Jesus loves you?" I will never forget how I felt. I looked at her, and I said, "Mrs. Bethel, does He love me as much as the other little boys and girls who have on shoes?" She hugged me to her breast and said, "I think He loves you more than He loves anybody else in the room today."

'Twas her compassion that made a difference.

Compassion makes a difference.